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NRO Mission

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5 October 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Meeting with Secretary McNamara, DCI,
Deputy Secretary Gilpatric, and DNRO
Relative to NRO

I. NRO Organization

Mr. McCone presented his paper relative to revision of the NRO organization to eliminate the present dual reporting feature for the DNRO and the establishment of the Secretary of Defense as Executive Agent to the National Reconnaissance Planning Group. In commenting on the proposal Secretary McNamara stated that he had always had reservations on the requirement for a special organization for reconnaissance and did not understand why in the long run this could not be handled by normal intelligence organizational procedures. He went on to state that he would like to look to one organization in the Defense Department for all intelligence matters and felt that perhaps NSA and NRO should be subordinate to DIA. Mr. McCone indicated that he felt that both NSA and NRO activities transcended strictly military intelligence and that it would be undesirable to have this subordination. He also pointed out the present difficulties which DIA was having in getting itself to be a truly functional organization.

Dr. Charyk and I emphasized the desirability of maintaining a NRO operating at the present level in order to permit better centralized direction of the programs of the various agencies and to permit streamlined management of the projects so that research and operations could occur simultaneously.

Secretary McNamara indicated that while he was satisfied for the present with the existing NRO organization, he would review Mr. McCone's paper and discuss it with him at a later date.

NRO review(s) completed.

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II. NRO Budget Procedures:

Mr. McCone stated his views which were outlined in the revised NRO organization paper. He indicated the desire to have a single NRO program and budget which would be presented to the Bureau of the Budget with an indication of the portions for which CIA, AF, Navy, etc., should have the responsibility. CIA then would defend its portion through its normal procedures with Congress and money appropriated to it through DOD in the same fashion as the remainder of the CIA budget.

Secretary McNamara stated that the only question was the preservation of the integrity of the NRO funds and program. He felt it was essential that none of the agencies could transfer funds which had been designated and defended for NRO purposes to other non-NRO projects. Mr. McCone concurred in this and indicated that any such transfers would have to be approved by the Secretary of Defense and the DCI. (Following the meeting I got the impression that Dr. Charyk is still hedging on this subject and wishes to establish internal NRO budgetary controls over the program. However, I am hopeful that this can be worked out without further reference to you or Secretary McNamara. The latter's comments to DCI on his paper should be indicative in this respect.)

III. Contracting:

Mr. McCone raised the problems involved in CIA contracting for black DOD programs. He indicated the difficulties of this but felt that they could be worked out. However, this would require discussions with Mr. Campbell, GAO.

IV. National Reconnaissance Program:

With the modifications discussed below, the proposed National Reconnaissance Program was approved by Mr. McCone and Secretary McNamara.

- (a) Mr. McCone raised the question of the continuation of the 201 program. Mr. McNamara indicated that he had approved

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the 3 additional 201 firings despite the cost of about [redacted]

as a reasonable hedge against a complete failure of the J program. After some discussion as to the need for this hedge, it was agreed that the 3 firings would be authorized on a stretched-out schedule with the understanding that this decision could be reviewed momentarily if the J program appeared more certain.

(b) Discussion was held on the FIRE FLY and A-12 O drone programs. It was agreed that FIRE FLY should go ahead for possible use in Cuba. At this point there was considerable discussion on the need to have a more forceful reconnaissance program in the Cuban area. The value of the A-12 O as a potential hedge against the inability to get permission for the manned vehicle was discussed. It was admitted that the technical characteristics and feasibility of this system were still uncertain and that the first phase of the program could probably be useful in clearing up some of these uncertainties, before the very large sums of money would be committed. It was, therefore, agreed to proceed with this program with the understanding that when the data from the study phase was available, then a further decision would be made on the final development. (Subsequent to the meeting Dr. Charyk agreed that CIA should undertake the development responsibilities for this program in the same way as for the A-12).

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V. RB-X Disclosure:

Mr. McCone expressed his concern about potential damage to the A-12 intelligence program which might result from any disclosure in connection with the RB-X program. He felt while the cover story was about the best that might be developed, it would not prevent wide-spread speculation and compromise of the A-12. Secretary McNamara understood his concern and said that he felt a

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decision on this could well wait for a month since many actions were required prior to the time such a disclosure might occur. Mr. McCone expressed the concern of the President's Intelligence Board in this connection, and all agreed that prior to making any decision the matter would have to be thoroughly discussed with the President. The NRO was requested to raise the matter again with the DCI and Secretary of Defense the first of November.

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HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.
Deputy Director
(Research)

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Agreement Between
Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence
on
National Reconnaissance Planning and Operations

Definitions:

- NRPG - National Reconnaissance Planning Group
NRP - National Reconnaissance Program, to consist of all [redacted] satellite and overflight projects for intelligence, geodesy and mapping photography and electronic signal collection
NRO - National Reconnaissance Office
DNR O - Director, National Reconnaissance Office

Responsibilities:

The National Reconnaissance Planning Group (NRPG), consisting of the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence, is responsible for providing policy and program guidance and managerial direction for the National Reconnaissance Program (NRP) and for making final determinations in connection therewith which do not require the exercise of higher authority. The Secretary of Defense, as Executive Agent, is responsible for implementing plans and policies developed by the NRPG, and for that purpose has established a National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) to manage and conduct the NRP in such manner as to insure the most effective utilization of the particular talents, experience, and capabilities within the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency. The Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Director of Central Intelligence, designates the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office (DNR O), who is responsible for the operation of that office in accordance with the following terms and conditions:

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1. Requirements and Priorities:

The NRP will be directly responsive to, and only to, the photographic and electronic signal (SIGINT) collection requirements and priorities established by the United States Intelligence Board and will develop the over-all reconnaissance program to satisfy these requirements.

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2. Management:

a. The technical management responsibility for all the NRP is assigned to the DNRQ. Under this over-all responsibility for NRP, DNRQ will utilize existing resources in the following manner:

(1) CIA will be the Executive Agent for DNRQ for those covert projects already under its management and such additional covert projects as are assigned to it by the NRPG.

(2) To provide for full use of available capabilities and resources, and to provide for interface with data exploitation equipment development by agencies outside the NRO, personnel of Army, Navy, Air Force, and CIA, will be assigned, on a full-time basis, to appropriate positions within the NRO under the DNRQ.

(3) A firm liaison channel between the NRO and the NSA will be established as an adjunct to the technical management structure of signal collection projects, and the conduct of such projects carried out in accordance with the exploitation responsibilities of the NSA.

(4) Planning will encompass maximum utilization of the technical and operational resources of the DOD, the Army, Navy, Air Force, NSA, and the CIA to support all collection programs, including, but not limited to, electronic signal and photographic collection programs.

b. Financial Management:

(1) The DNRQ will be responsible for review and approval of the total NRP budget.

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For those covert projects for which it has management responsibility under paragraph 2.a.(1) above, CIA will normally include funds in its regular appropriations. If funds are required in addition to such appropriations, NRPG, with the approval of the Bureau of the Budget, may authorize transfers of appropriate

amounts from DOD to CIA. In the event it is assigned such projects prior to obtaining such appropriations, initial funding may be by transfer of such funds from DOD to CIA as NRPG with the approval of the Bureau of the Budget may direct, subsequent funding to be obtained by CIA through normal appropriation channels. On those projects where CIA acts as procurement agent for NRO, the funds will be advanced or reimbursed by DOD to CIA in accordance with the principles of the Economy Act.

(2) DNRO will have responsibility for all NRP contracts in accordance with the assignment of technical management responsibility in paragraph 2. a. Consistent with paragraph 2. a. (1), CIA will be the Executive Agent of the DNRO, responsible for administering procurement and contracting for covert projects for which it is assigned responsibility under paragraph 2. a. (1), and for covert contracting necessary for the support of overt projects.

3. Security:

In accordance with the basic responsibility of the Director of Central Intelligence for protection of intelligence sources and methods, CIA will establish security policy for the NRP, including provision for a uniform system of security control and appropriate delegations of security responsibility.

4. Operations:

a. Scheduling: The mission schedule for all NRP efforts will be the sole responsibility of DNRO, subject to coordination with CIA on covert projects for which it is Executive Agent and the obtaining of appropriate clearances where required from higher authority. Operational control for individual projects under the NRP will be assigned to the DOD or to the CIA by the DNRO in accordance with policy guidance from the NRPG. DNRO will be responsible to assure that mission planning will make full use of all intelligence available in the community.

b. Format: The DNRO will be responsible for the format of the collected NRP product as follows:

(1) Photographic format will include the initial chemical processing, titling, production and delivery to the users as specified by the USIB.

(2) Electronic signal data format will include the decommutation, conversion, technical correction and reconstruction of the collected signal data to yield a usable collection product. DNR O will deliver the collection product in proper format together with associated data necessary for exploitation, to the NSA or other user as specified by the USIB.

c. Engineering Analysis: The DNR O will be responsible for engineering analysis of all collection systems to correct the problems that exist on the operating system as well as to provide information for new systems. In connection with covert projects for which CIA is Executive Agent, this responsibility will be carried out under the supervision of CIA.

5. The DNR O is responsible for advanced plans (post CY-1962) in support of the NRP. In view of the DCI's major responsibility to the NSC for all intelligence programs, all NRO advanced planning will be coordinated with CIA.

6. Public releases of information will be the responsibility of the DNR O subject to the security guidance of CIA.

7. The Deputy Director (Research), CIA, will be responsible for seeing that the participation of CIA in this Agreement is carried out.

John A. McCone
Director of Central Intelligence

Roswell L. Gilpatric
Deputy Secretary of Defense

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